

The author particularly excels, as is well known, in his truly wonderful clinical descriptions. He brings into prominence the important symptoms, leaves in the background the non-important ones, with all the skill with which a landscape artist blends his colors and allots the relative space to things which he wishes to depict.

Search where one will throughout the book, there can scarcely be found an omission in his clinical descriptions. The same cannot be said for his statements concerning the pathology of many diseases.

The volumes are rather generously illustrated, but with extremely bad wood cuts. In fact, candor compels us to state, that there is scarcely a pretentious book published to-day in which the execution of the illustrations is so shockingly bad. They are not wanting in praiseworthy conception.

It is superfluous to commend the book, and we can only concur in what has so frequently been said of it before, it is the best of its kind.

J. C.

ÉTAT MÉNTAL DES HYSTÉRIQUES. Les Accidents Mén-
taux. Par Pierre Janet, Ancien élève de l'École
Normale Supérieure, Professeur Agrégé au Collège
Rollin, etc. With five cuts in the text, 501 pp.
Paris, Rueff et Cie., Publishers, 1894.

ÉTAT MÉNTAL DES HYSTÉRIQUES. Les Stigmates Mén-
taux; 233 pp. By the same Author and Publisher.
Paris, 1894.

These two elegant little volumes form two numbers of the Charcot-Debove Library which is being issued by this well-known Paris publishing house and which may be said to be a revolution in typographical art. The numbers of this library are bound in black kid-leather with the titles in gilt letters and the paper the very best. These two numbers are a study of the mental condition of hysterics from a philosophic point of view. Though it has long been suspected that hysteria was a mental disease, it is only in recent years that the conviction has gained a solid basis that it is above all, a mental affection. Charcot, with his eminent authority in the field of nervous diseases, has lent his powerful influence in its support.

In order to understand the mechanism of this neurosis he precedes his work with a few summary remarks on the normal psychology, and especially the words "consciousness" and "personality." Consciousness is inseparable from personality. Certain pathological states of the mind induce a permanent restriction of the field of consciousness and this supposed psychological alteration the writer holds to be the best and most comprehensive explanation of the stigmata of hysteria: the anæsthesiæ, in the field of sensibility, and the paralyses, catalepsies, contractures, in the domain of motility, and lastly, in intelligence, the amnesiæ, and

abulæ which disturbances represent the permanent stigmata of this diseased state. One of the most important psychological consequences of restriction of the field of consciousness is that a large number of sensations are not assimilated by the personality of the subject. They may exist and persist in the mind without association with the personality, either alone, in simple form, or they may combine and form a personality independent of the original, and even predominate, for a time. These combinations and alterations of personality correspond to the greater part of the accidents or paroxysms of hysteria: noctambulism, vigilambulism, spontaneous or provoked somnambulism and the attacks, in particular. The particular characteristics of hysterics: erotism, coquetry, simulation, suggestibility, emotivity, impulsivity, difficulty of fixing the attention and mobility he also refers to the same source, a restriction of the field of consciousness. From what has been stated it will be seen that the conception of hysteria as a mental disease gives a rational and clear explanation of the greater portion of the manifestations of this neurosis: anæsthesia, hyperæsthesia, contracture, paralysis, catalepsy, attacks, delirium, somnambulism, etc., though there is a particular series of phenomena which are ranged with difficulty under this interpretation, as, for example, the visceral symptoms of hysteria, trophic disturbances, vasomotor and secretory, which are by no means rare. Certain of these are but recently known while others, tympanites, vomiting, hemorrhages—(bloody sweat and tears), were observed long ago. Blocq suggests that some of these are dependent upon fixed ideas, others on suggestions. Though we do not understand the mechanism of these particular disturbances, yet they do not conflict with the ideas advanced by the author. To recapitulate, hysteria is a mental disease characterized by weakening of the power of psychological synthesis with restriction of the field of consciousness. Hence a certain number of perceptions are suppressed from the personality of the subject—stigmata—with a tendency to the formation of secondary and independent personalities which alternate or coexist with the original (accidents).

It is an instructive work and one which will do much to place the mechanism and knowledge of this disease upon a solid basis. F. H. P.